

Montgomery College Community Conversation #3

Montgomery College campus, Science North #100

June 6, 2017

Public Question and Answer Summary

Note: References to Option 1 or the “old option” refer to the 2006-2016 Facilities Master Plan.

References to Option 2 or the “new option: refer to the 2013-2023 Facilities Master Plan.

Paul Chrostowski – Takoma Park resident, community college graduate.

Frustrated by lack of supporting documentation of the calculations for cost of the options and the time frame for design and construction. Strongly recommend use of computer aided education to reduce space requirements and meet industry needs. Interdisciplinary work is not new.

***Response:** Montgomery College is required to use formulas set by the State of Maryland to calculate the cost and time estimates. The College has to meet rigorous standards regarding the space needs of the sciences. They will maximize use of computer aided tools.*

Catherine Shelton – Takoma Park resident, Montgomery College alumna.

Everyone is in agreement about the need to improve the resources/education tools for students. The disagreement is about the feasibility of underground parking. Can we do a community fundraiser for it?

***Response:** The College welcomes fundraising opportunities, usually for academic scholarships. The cost of underground parking, approximately \$50,000 a parking space (totaling between \$4.2 and \$5 million), was not incorporated into the plan.*

Steve Haggis – Montgomery College faculty

Clarification of the Second Phase Plan of Option 2 – the slide references the elimination of Falcon Hall at a later date and the replacement with a health and fitness facility.

***Response:** Though it has not been scheduled, the College plans to replace the athletic facilities and Science North within 5-10 years, depending on the budget. Math and science are mandatory for all students, so the College has to prioritize them. The County is building a new facility less than 1 ½ miles from campus in 2019. The College is looking to make arrangements with the new facility.*

Katherine Hill – Takoma Park resident, College employee

Concerned about the impact of the project on the existing, mature trees.

***Response:** The College is committed to protecting and retaining the trees as an important part of the campus.*

Judy Hill – Silver Spring resident, swimmer

Concerned that the comparisons of the old plan and the new plan are not equivalents. The new plan doesn't include the costs of demolishing the building or renovating Science North.

Response: The 2006-16 Plan includes the demolition of Science South and building the new building, followed by the demolition of Science North and the construction of the new building. Science facilities need to be maintained during the process. In the 2013-23 Plan, Science North stays in operation and Science South and Falcon Hall would be demolished and rebuilt. Science North would be renovated at a later date.

Marcie Stickle – Takoma Park resident, Silver Spring Historical Society

Encourage consideration of building on the W1/Burlington lot. Support the 2006-2016 Plan.

Response: Thank you.

Elizabeth Berwyn – Takoma Park resident, swims at Falcon Hall

Impression that the demolition of Falcon Hall is already decided, with no alternative plan.

Response: College is considering both plans: the old Facilities Master Plan and the new Facilities Master Plan. "Honor the process." Dr. Pollard clarified and confirmed that she has not made a decision, and that both plans are being seriously, thoughtfully considered. The only decision that is no longer under consideration is the W1/Burlington lot.

Erin Fulham – resident, alumna, health care provider

Thank you for considering both plans; emphasize the importance of recreational and health activities. The cost needs to consider more than just the money, but also what is lost in giving up Falcon Hall.

Response: Health and wellness are critical. The College also has to consider the cost of maintaining and upgrading Falcon Hall, which was opened in 1978. The facility is in poor condition with a failing roof, no AC, no ADA-accessible accommodations, and needs \$5 million in deferred maintenance. The College has to prioritize what students need in order to graduate.

Vicky Gray – Silver Spring resident, College employee

Need to recognize the lifecycle of a building. When it rains and the roof leaks, it impacts the classrooms and students. The aging Science buildings need replacement, and if not now, then they will be demolished in the next 5 to 10 years. Look at what will serve the students' best interests.

Yemi Onity – Montgomery College faculty

We have choices. We need facilities that support excellence of education. Need to respond to the needs, demands, expectations of the future in science and engineering (i.e. driverless cars). Need to prepare students for the 21st century.

Jason Michele – Montgomery College lab coordinator

If the plan is to keep Science North for 10 years, the labs are outdated now. Will they be renovated?

***Response:** Science North will be demolished in the next 5 – 10 years. College may be able to access deferred maintenance funds to address part of what the labs need now.*

Anita Powell – Montgomery College Board of Trustees, alumna

Have attended all the meetings, impressed by community participation. Let's talk about the need to get it done as soon as possible.

David Kaplan - Takoma Park resident

Is maintaining Falcon Hall still an option in the discussion? If Science North and South are rebuilt, will the College commit to keeping Falcon Hall?

***Response:** Both Facilities Master Plans are still in consideration. The College cannot commit to renovating Falcon Hall. The State of Maryland will not put funds into parking or athletic facilities, so that funding would have to come from Montgomery County. The facility has outlived its usefulness. The College cannot commit to maintaining it without funding.*

David Kaplan - Takoma Park resident

Will the College maintain the setback on Falcon Hall?

***Response:** Yes, the setback on Takoma Avenue will be the same. For the setback on Fenton, the College will try to keep it the same, depending on County and city requirements.*

Tonya Seed – College employee of 10 years

Falcon Hall is old and has lots of problems. Recognize the importance of science and math and move the College forward. Support the College's position.

***Response:** Falcon Hall fact sheet available. Estimated costs for new mechanical system: \$2.8 million; new elevator: \$100,000; energy saving measures of insulation, waterproofing: \$3 million; ADA compliance upgrades: \$350,000. The usage of the pool at Falcon Hall: average of 17 people per day; 85 annual passes sold to community residents; 54 students enrolled in swim classes in 2016-17 academic year.*

Peter Kovar – Takoma Park resident, Takoma Park City Council member

If the setback stays the same, does the building need to be taller?

If you choose Option 1, could the time be shortened by alternative phasing: doing design for both buildings concurrently and then phasing construction?

***Response:** The massing will be on the Science building side, not the Takoma Avenue side, so the height at Takoma Avenue would be 2+ stories. The original plan would be taller, four stories with no option for stepped height. The phasing for two buildings in the original plan is based on the funding schedule and the need to adapt to changes in construction materials and standards without a significant time lag between design and construction.*

Jade Cline-Stokes – Montgomery College student

Presenting the student perspective: education is the priority before anything else, even recreation.

Richard Trabell – Montgomery College staff

Falcon Hall is inadequate. The elevator only goes two floors in a three story building. The College is not in the business of providing swimming pools.

Response: The College has heard a clear recognition that the College needs new science facilities. Community colleges serve many purposes and balance needs in the community. If the decision is option 2, which eliminates Falcon Hall, the College will consider partnering to create alternatives: membership in other facilities, discounts, shuttles, etc. The College has the best interests of the community, just a difference in approach.

David Ash – resident, swimmer

The pool, which is a remarkable resource, is closed now for maintenance. The pool is in good shape, the building is not. Why aren't facilities upgraded now? Doesn't require a new building to upgrade. The dilemma is these two choices and neither is great.

Response: This is the paradox of publically supported institutions. The State has only allocated \$60 million this year for capital funds for all 16 community colleges. Montgomery County works to match state funding and staff works to keep facilities functioning. The State process creates the funding parameters. The new science complex at the Rockville campus was 24 years in the making. The College is committed to moving forward to address shared interests and compromises.

Rashani Ward Williamson – Montgomery College student

We are making decisions for the future, decisions that we may not personally benefit from. Younger brother wants to be an engineer. Make the best decision for his future to study science, maybe at Montgomery College.

Lauren Dunton – Silver Spring resident

Pleased to be a neighbor of the College. Works as a consultant for community colleges around the country. Community Colleges are on the cutting edge, given the increase in education costs. This campus is not good, not as nice as many other community college campuses. Supports the plans, excited to hear about the new building and the desire to give students the best education possible.

Cedric - Montgomery College student

Both an athlete and a biology major – he has to choose between sports and school, as do other students. Education is the priority; science is more of a priority than the pool.

Bernie Aronson – Takoma Park resident

Appreciate this meeting as most civil and respectful of the conversations. Appreciate Dr. Pollard's statement about getting public funds, hope we come out of this process with a decision that is a win-win and go lobby the state for funding. Wants to counter the perception that the community dreamed up preserving Falcon Hall when it was not in the plans until two years ago. Clarify: would the new proposal preserve the setbacks? Sounds like an expansion into the historic district.

Response: *On Takoma Avenue, the setback will remain the same; the building will be 2-stories fronting Takoma Avenue. The upper part of the facility will have greater massing. If the design changes, it may force the setback on Fenton to change. There is a distinction between “expansion” and “revitalization.” Expansion is acquiring new property, building new buildings. The College will only expand on the Silver Spring side. Revitalization is replacing existing facilities, which is their commitment for Takoma Park. The College will have a charrette process for the design.*